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James Anderton Hall to W S Hall, 7 December 1879

Hamersley Range

Dec 7th 1879

My dear brother

I wish to write a few lines to you and let you know how we are getting [sic] on, after I had been stuck at the big Hill three days I found I might stay there as long again for most of my Horses had lost shoes and I had no nails to put others on I could not get any in Roebourne or Cossack I Packed most of my Load up the Hill and then I started to the Millstream to get Horses to help me up the Hill I and Douse had got close to the big Hill with his two teams we met Redge and a nother man of Mr Hikes George Craggs which he had sent off at once to our place to render any assistance they could Craggs volunteered to stay with my team and bring it along and I and Redge to proceed to [?TEangingin] a distance of thirty miles w[h]ere Lilly and the dear children were we found them all right thank God but very much fatigued after a long tramp of Thirty Miles of rough country of Spinifex and stones they started in the Evening after Barlow had got a prick in the hand from a Natives spear Barlow went on like a fool and a madman he told Lilly when he saw she did not intend to leave the place and it was night he said he knew they would all be killed that night and that he could not defend them in the least for he could not hold a Revolver in his Hand if one Native came he could kill the lot of them for he would have to stand and look on Barlow kept saying he could hear the Natives coming and they would all soon be killed so at last Lilly made up her mind and they started and stole away as quietly as they could I was very much [?annoid] at all Barlows proceedings in the matter and think he was to blame throughout all the affair and I have told him so we are going to live on a [?nice] rise in the plain Redge has been to look at the place with me and he says it is the pretiest place he ever saw and I would not wish to have a better place to live at on the 1st of Dec I and Willie took a load of things to the Creek we are now camped at and when we got back we found that Barlow was so frightened of the Natives that he left his own hut and came without being told and slept in Clarres & Willies about half an hour after he had

been in the hut it took *Fire* and the Vagabond did not save one single thing all our horse gear was on a pole close to the [?heat] and he let all of them be burnt the Native Johnney saved one Pack & Bags the poor old side saddle and one mans old saddle there was Willies & Clarres box with close and all sorts of things I expect we have lost between 50 and £60 worth of things and I think that dreadful and a man and Native on the spot I asked Barlow what he had been about he told me he had done all he could do to save things, there was not the least wind that night and every thing aught to have been saved Barlow *swore* it was the bush Natives that had come and set the place on Fire to burn him I told him it was his blasted Pipe that had done it and not to tell any of his lies I say Shake I do not know when things will take a turn for the better with us but we are having a rough time of it but we thank God we might be much worse we have our health and strength and we will try to live in that way that God will help us Clarence could not bring up the Cattle on account of both the Road board wells having stinking water in them so our Cattle are in Hancocks Paddock the wells are to be cleaned out and Clarrie & Willie are going down shortly to bring them up Captain Miles promised me some Dimond Night I wish you would see him and get some from him for me for we shall want a good lot of it as we shall be putting [sic] down more wells

Remember me kindly to all your family all the children send their love to all of you

Believe me your affct brother

J A Hall

Dec 25th

Dear Shake

Clarence & Willie are to start to Hancocks to morrow for the Cattle so I thought I would let you have a line of our latest news on 22nd and 23rd we had a splendid rain and we are going to have some more to night the heaviest of our rain has been on our large block of land the Country looks lovely we shall be very much obliged if you will send us a few Swan Papers sometimes wishing you all a Merry Xmas & a happy new Year
Yours sincerely

J A H